

AGENDA



Thursday, May 17, 2007

**Police
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 10**

Subject: Authorize an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Austin and Travis County, in the amount of \$5,800 per month, for funding a sixth Forensic Chemist Full Time Employee who will perform drug analysis at the Austin Police Department Forensic Science Division Laboratory.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding for a sixth forensic chemist will be provided by Travis County on a reimbursement basis at the rate of \$5,800 per month; compensation for partial months will be prorated.

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: Cathy Ellison, Chief of Police (Acting)/974-5030

The Austin Police Department Forensic Science Division Laboratory currently performs drug analysis for "Rocket Docket" cases submitted by the Austin Police Department. "Rocket Docket" cases involve defendants in pre-trial confinement who have been charged with drug-related offenses. This Interlocal Agreement with Travis County will fully fund a sixth Forensic Chemist position at the Austin Police Department Forensic Science Division Laboratory whose priority will be performing analysis on "Rocket Docket" drug evidence submitted by the Austin Police Department and the Travis County Sheriff's Office. This relationship is beneficial to both the City and the County, as adding this new Forensic Chemist will decrease the turnaround time between the submission of "Rocket Docket" drug evidence for analysis and the completion of such analysis. Defendants in pre-trial confinement who have been charged with drug crimes are often unwilling to dispose of their cases until a laboratory analysis of drug evidence has been completed. Delays in completing laboratory analyses of drug evidence result in an increase in the length of pre-trial confinement time; thus, significantly increasing jail costs for taxpayers. In sum, decreasing pre-trial incarceration times will significantly reduce jail costs related to "Rocket Docket" cases.

This Agreement, contingent upon future funding, shall begin when it has been signed by both parties, and shall continue through September 30, 2007. It is subject to continued funding, and shall automatically renew annually, on October 1 of each successive year, for up to two (2) one-year renewal terms, unless terminated by either party. A copy of the Interlocal Agreement is attached as back-up material.